



581/15-72-0931

7 December 1972

MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

SUBJECT: NSC Staff Debriefing on Soviet Leadership

1. Yesterday at the EOB, before a small group of CIA, INR, and DIA officers, Hal Sonnenfeldt of Dr. Kissinger's staff, flanked by Bill Hyland and Andy Marshall, presented his first-hand impressions of Soviet elite personalities and procedures. The two-hour debriefing was off the record, and no one took notes.

2. Sonnenfeldt had traveled to the Soviet Union three times this year: in April to take part in talks with Kosygin, in May as one of the Presidential party during the summit meeting, and again in September for trade talks with Brezhnev at the Black Sea. He thus was able to deliver some quite vivid observations about the Soviet leaders in varying circumstances.

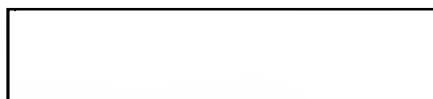
3. The debriefing provided little new intelligence. In particular, Sonnenfeldt avoided direct comment on sensitive and unresolved issues of US-Soviet concern. He ducked, for example, one question

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CLASSIFICATION
GROUP 1 (S) (C) or (U) (If none or more)
Date Improbable to Determine
(unless impossible, insert date or event)

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concerning attitudes to on-site inspection. Still, the chance to hear and question him was useful in providing a double-check on our understanding of the decision-making milieu. Nothing that was said eroded that understanding, and it was gratifying to have the general lines of DD/I analyses on the workings of the Soviet elite confirmed by a knowledgeable eye-witness.



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